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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JUNE 11, 2009

Summary: The killing of 80 militants in Pakistani military's ongoing operation in the frontier region of Bannu dominated headlines in all newspapers on Thursday. Newspapers also highlighted report that the "security forces attacked Taliban positions with artillery and helicopter gunships in the offensive." The handing over of "four U.S. MI-17 cargo helicopters to the Pakistan Army" received extensive coverage in almost all major newspapers. Prime Minister Gilani's statement urging "India to resume composite dialogue to resolve bilateral issues" received front page display. At the same time, newspapers also reported that U.S. Undersecretary William Burns "pressed India to resume talks with Pakistan." The English language daily, "Dawn," reported that an "amendment made to the aid to Pakistan bill authorizes the U.S. president to proclaim duty-free treatment of certain textile and apparel products from Pakistan." Pakistani Ambassador to U.S. Haqqani's meeting with detained Dr. Aafia Siddiqui in a Texas health facility also receive prominent display.

Most dailies ran critical editorials on the devastating strike against the five-star hotel in Peshawar. The leading mass circulation Urdu daily "Jang," advised that "as terrorists always work out new and novel methods for their terrible acts, it is essential to train the policemen and the security personnel about the modern techniques to confront terror campaign." The Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" editorialized that the blast was "another sobering reminder that the terrorists are continually adapting their modus operandi and probing gaps in security arrangements in what should be high-security areas." The Islamabad-based English daily "Pakistan Observer," exclaimed that "it is strange that the gory incidents continue unabated despite the fact that the law enforcing agencies have made unprecedented security arrangements involving road blocks, checking, security cameras and electronic walk-through gates." End Summary.

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News Stories  
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"80 Militants Killed In Bannu Action" "The Nation" (06/11)

"More than 80 militants were reportedly killed and many more sustained injuries during the two days' operation the security forces had launched against Jani Khel and Baka Khel tribes in Frontier Region (FR) Bannu. Besides, some five vehicles likely to be used for suicide attacks by the militants were also destroyed. The forces assisted by gunship helicopters and artillery targeted the hideouts of the militants."

"United States Provides MI-17 Cargo Helicopters To Pakistan Military" "The News," "Daily Times," "Pakistan Observer" "Jang," "Nawa-i-Waqt," "Express," "Ausaf," "Islam," "Aaj Kal" (06/11)

"In response to a request from the government of Pakistan, the United States delivered four MI-17 cargo helicopters to the Pakistani Army on Wednesday. The additional helicopters are meant to enhance Pakistan's capabilities in current operations against militant extremists, and its efforts to care for hundreds of thousands of Pakistanis who have been displaced from their homes by the fighting. The U.S. is in the process of identifying additional MI-17s that may be made available to Pakistan in the future."

"PM Urges India To Resume Talks" "Dawn" (06/11)

"Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani said on Wednesday that India and Pakistan could not afford a war and it was in the interest of the entire region that the two nuclear powers resumed their composite dialogue to resolve bilateral issues, while addressing students and faculty members of the Command and Staff College, Quetta."

"U.S. Presses India To Resume dialogue" "Dawn" (06/11)

"U.S. Under Secretary of State William Burns on Wednesday pressed India to resume talks with Pakistan but was told that Islamabad should do more first to prosecute the Mumbai terror suspects that New Delhi says are sheltered across the border."

"Pakistan Welcomes Indian PM's Peace Gesture" "The News" (06/11)

"Pakistan welcomed on Wednesday comments by India's Prime Minister that New Delhi would meet its neighbor 'more than half way' if it cracked down on militants, Foreign Ministry spokesman Abdul Basit said. 'We agree with India that in order to have peace between our two countries and for a viable stability for our region, it is absolutely important that our two countries talk to each other and resolve our bilateral issues peacefully.'"

"U.S. Likely To Allow Duty-Free Import Of Some Textile Items" "Dawn" (06/11)

"An amendment made to the aid to Pakistan bill authorizes the U.S. President to proclaim duty-free treatment of certain textile and apparel products from Pakistan. The amendment, debated on Tuesday and Wednesday in the U.S. Congress, also authorizes duty-free treatment of non-textile and non-apparel products, from designated Reconstruction Opportunity Zones within or through September 30, 2024."

"Haqqani Meets Aafia, Assures Her Of Legal Support" "The News" (06/11)

"Pakistan's ambassador to the United States Husain Haqqani met detained Pakistani neuroscientist Dr. Aafia Siddiqui in a Texas health facility and assured her of the government's full support for her early repatriation to homeland."

"U.S. Amendment Seeks Reforms In Pakistan To Curb Extremism" "Dawn" (06/11)

"The objectives of U.S. policy towards Pakistan are to empower and enable Pakistan to develop into a prosperous and democratic state that is at peace with itself and with its neighbors, says an amendment moved in Congress. The amendment, which is likely to be adopted, also requires Pakistan to actively confront, and deny safe haven to Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and other extremists. Pakistan is also required to implement the economic, legal, and social reforms required to create an environment that discourages violent Islamic extremism; and to maintain robust command and control over its nuclear weapons technology. The amendment B proposes to fully fund the Obama administration's request for non-military assistance of

\$1.5 billion for Pakistan for the fiscal 2010 and provides 'such sums' as may be necessary through 2013."

"UN And Foreign Missions Suspend Work In Peshawar" "The News" (06/11)

"Foreign missions have suspended their activities in Peshawar following Tuesday's suicide attack on the five-star hotel. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Program (WFP), the American Consulate in Peshawar and several other diplomatic missions and international bodies suspended their activities in the city by directing foreign officials to restrict their movement. The WFP also suspended its operations, but its activities for the internally displaced persons (IDPs) of the Malakand Division will continue."

"U.S. Planned To Buy Peshawar PC: Report" "The News" website (06/11)

"According to a report published two weeks ago in the McClatchy Newspapers, and quoted in the New York Times on Wednesday, the Pearl Continental Hotel in Peshawar was apparently at the centre of an American plan to establish a long-term presence in Peshawar. A senior State Department official confirmed that the U.S. plan for the consulate in Peshawar involves the purchase of the luxury Pearl Continental hotel. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak publicly. Peshawar is an important station for gathering intelligence on the tribal area that surrounds the city on three sides and is a base for al Qaida and the Taliban. The area also will be a focus for expanded U.S. aid programs, and the American mission in Peshawar has already expanded from three U.S. diplomats to several dozen."

"U.S. Sees Anti-Taliban Consensus In Pakistan" "Dawn" (06/11)

"U.S. special envoy Richard Holbrooke said on Wednesday that he spent 'a good deal of time' with Nawaz Sharif during his latest visit to Pakistan and witnessed a new consensus among Pakistanis against the Taliban. Mr. Holbrooke, who returned from Pakistan earlier this week, told a briefing in Washington that recent terrorist attacks had enraged the Pakistani people who were now showing a new resolve to defeat the extremists. Referring to the bombing of the Pearl Continental Hotel in Peshawar on Tuesday, Mr. Holbrooke said there were confirmed media reports that the U.S. was trying to buy this place to build a consulate there. The bombings, he said, were enraging the population and were 'not going to work' in Taliban's favor, if the Pakistan government provided the necessary security."

"U.S. Cautions Its Citizens In Peshawar" "Daily Times" (06/11)

"U.S. Consulate personnel in Peshawar have been instructed to limit their movements until further notice, the U.S. Embassy said on Wednesday in its latest warden notice. The notice has been issued to notify U.S. citizens about possible dangers following the Pearl Continental bombing in Peshawar."

"Unknown Group Claims Peshawar Hotel Bombing" "The News" (06/11)

"An unknown Al-Qaeda-linked group, Abdullah Azzam Shaheed Brigade, claimed responsibility for Tuesday's bombing at the Pearl Continental Hotel in Peshawar. A spokesman of the organisation, Amir Muawiya, phoned reporters in Kohat city on Wednesday, claiming responsibility for the attack and threatened more such bombings."

"800 Terrorists Reach Janikhel: ISPR" "The News" (06/11)

"Military spokesman Maj-Gen Athar Abbas, when contacted by telephone, told 'The News,' on Wednesday that from 600 to 800 terrorists have reached Janikhel, which falls in Frontier Region of Bannu. Janikhel is the staging area of all the militants operating in D.I. Khan, Bannu, Kohat and Peshawar."

"23 Terrorists Killed In Swat, Says ISPR" "The News" (06/11)

"The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Wednesday said that 23 more terrorists were killed in various areas of Swat, Malakand and Dir. It said two soldiers embraced Shahadat and 12 others including two officers were injured during the operation."

"Dir Lashkar Pushes Taliban To Last Hideout" "The News" (06/11)

"The armed villagers fighting the Taliban in the remote Doog Darra area of Dir Upper made advances into Shatkas village after using

heavy weapons on Wednesday, destroying several bunkers and killing two more militants. The Taliban are now pushed towards their last hideout, situated at the mountain top in Kandao area of Ghazigay, a resident of Maluk Khwar, a village that previously supported the militants, told 'The News' late Wednesday."

"Holbrooke Terms IDPs 'Major, Major Crisis'" "The News" (06/11)

"U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke called on Wednesday for refugees from the combat zone in western Pakistan to be allowed to return home as soon as possible, ending a grave crisis. 'This is a major, major crisis,' Holbrooke told reporters at the State Department following his trip to Pakistan last week, adding it is the largest refugee flow since Pakistan split from India 62 years ago."

"IDPs An 'Opportunity' For America And Pakistan" "Daily Times" (06/11)

"The U.S. needs to help Pakistan deliver urgently needed aid to millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to protect them from the Taliban, a U.S. lawmaker and experts have said. Around 2.5 million people have streamed out of northwestern areas since the government launched a campaign against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, said John Tierney, who heads the U.S. House Oversight Committee's subcommittee on national security."

"UN Fears 500,000 More IDPs From Waziristan" "The News" (06/11)

"The United Nations is preparing for some half a million people to flee Pakistan's northwest region of Waziristan if the government mounts a big operation against Taliban militants there, John Holmes, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs said."

"Jamaat-e-Islami To Hold 'Go (Away) America Go (Away)' Rally In Karachi On June 14" "Jasarat" (06/11)

"Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi is organizing an anti-American rally in Karachi on June 14 at Mazar-e-Qauid. JI Chief Syed Munawar Hassan will lead the rally, and he has urged Muslims to unite against American domination, and raise slogan 'No to American slavery.'"

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Editorials/Op-eds  
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"Terrorism In Peshawar," an editorial in the leading mass circulation centrist Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (06/11)

"As terrorists always work out new and novel methods for their terrible acts, it is essential to train the policemen and the security personnel about the modern techniques to confront terror campaign. We should keep in mind the terror incident at the Police call center in Islamabad recently, where the security personnel were more vigilant and resisted the terrorists vehemently, and consequently there was relatively less human loss."

"Failure To Protect," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (06/11)

"The devastating strike against the Pearl Continental hotel in Peshawar is another sobering reminder that the terrorists are continually adapting their modus operandi and probing gaps in security arrangements in what should be high-security areas.... What is clear is that there was a spectacular failure of security at the hotel itself and the surrounding neighborhood.... With humanitarian workers and officials from international aid agencies flocking to help the IDPs in the north-west, the local, provincial and federal administrations should have already had a plan in place to protect the hotel.... Clearly, more - much more - needs to be done on the security front."

"Why These Security Lapses?," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (06/11)

"It is all the more shocking that the building is adjacent to the spatial residence of Corps Commander Peshawar, which is supposed to have adequate security system in place to take care of the

surroundings. It is strange that the gory incidents continue unabated despite the fact that the law enforcing agencies have made unprecedented security arrangements involving roadblocks, checking, security cameras and electronic walk-through gates.... It seems that all these arrangements are mere eyewash and those deployed to beef up security are not performing their duties vigilantly."

"Peshawar Hotel Blast," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (06/11)

"The Taliban are facing challenges in Pakistan as they never faced before. Their casualty rate is significant and they are on the run. But their strength arises from the years of exemption they enjoyed in Peshawar and the adjoining tribal and 'Frontier Region' (FR) cities. This strength is now being challenged and rolled back by the Pakistan Army. The targeting of hotels is significant. It cuts off cities from one another by preventing important people from travelling; and it cuts Pakistan off from the rest Of the world."

"No Respite," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (06/11)

"There were no attempts to suggest that a foreign hand was responsible for the blast or that there had been a failure of security by any individual or agency. The NWFP security apparatus is stretched to the limit by a full scale war.... There is no part of the land, no agency or institution, which is not in some way vulnerable to the murderous intend of those who now seek to bomb their way into power. There are groups of extremists in every town, in every Province, of Pakistan.... Those foreigners who came here to help us in a time of need may just think again, as some have paid with their lives. The bombing of the Peshawar Pearl Continental was predictable, efficiently done, and the national and provincial governments are virtually powerless to stop the same thing happening again."

"A Mortal Threat," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (06/11)

"It is the security of Peshawar itself that for quite some time has been deteriorating from bad to worse. A string of attacks killing scores of innocent civilians during a month's time have fuelled a wave of fear and anxiety... The ability of the terrorists to enter such sensitive areas to move with explosive-ridden vehicle with impunity speaks volumes about the battle readiness of our security and intelligence apparatuses. The police force suffers from lack of training and low morale to the extent of being totally ineffective.... For one thing, the government ought to enhance the capabilities of the security forces and make necessary arrangements for their proper training and devise strategies to fight this extreme kind of terrorism."

"Peshawar Suicide Attack: Failure Of Security?," an editorial in the Lahore-based populist center-right Urdu daily "Khabrain" (cir. 50,000) (06/11)

"When Marriot Hotel, Islamabad was attacked it was reported that American interests were targeted in the attack. Miami Herald wrote after the PC Peshawar attack that America was interested to buy it and change it into American Consulate. Similarly, New York Times disclosed that foreign agents were the target of PC, Peshawar attack, for the hotel was a meeting venue for secret agents.... Although some circles are describing the attack as a consequence of Swat operation, these foreign media reports are also worthy of attention."

"Peshawar Blast," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (06/11)

"The growing threat of terror, if not curtailed soon, signals to an ominous future. Time and again the people of Pakistan have to experience the inhuman terrorist activities, which to some people are the direct consequence of bad state policies. The government must analyze where it has failed and address those issues. Otherwise the innocent public would continue to suffer at the hands of the terrorists."

"Peshawar Incident: A Recurring Phenomenon," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-right sensationalist Urdu daily "Ummat" (cir.

33,000) (06/11)

"Stories have surfaced in the newspapers in the aftermath of the Peshawar bomb attack that the U.S. wanted to buy this hotel to open up its consulate and talks in this regard were under way. So it could have been the target, well whatever one may call it, a reaction to Swat operation, or something else, the people of this country are seriously worried that they are insecure everywhere."

"Yet Another Suicide Attack," an editorial in the Karachi-based right-wing pro-Jamaat-e-Islami Urdu daily "Jasarat" (cir. 3,000) (06/11)

"The tragic and horrifying suicide attack in Peshawar makes us feel like it has now become a routine. We need to remind our rulers that these suicide bombings are reaction to our policy of allying with America, as a friend of enemy is considered as enemy. Killing innocent people is contrary to the teachings of Islam, whatever may be reason there can be no justification for such attacks. Now question is that what is the difference between Americans and those who are carrying out suicide bombings, because both are killing innocent people indiscriminately."

"Appeal Of Taliban Spokesperson," an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (06/11)

"Local Taliban spokesperson Muslim Khan has appealed to Pakistan Ulema to play their role for the release of Maulana Sufi Muhammad, saying that the Maulana has been in the government custody. Muslim Khan also accused the security force for the killing of Taliban leader Ameer Izzat and Muhammad Alam. It is strange that when Pakistani Ulema appealed to the Taliban for ending their extremism and practice of suicide attacks etc., Muslim Khan and his associates had rejected it and now he is asking for Ulema's help for the release of Sufi Muhammad. The government's stand is that it hasn't arrested Sufi Muhammad and the Pak military spokesperson has endorsed the stand. As far as killing of Ameer Izzat and Muhammad Alam is concerned, the security forces could not have gained anything with their killing. Had they been alive they would have given important information to the security forces.... It was Taliban who attacked the military convoy that was transporting the two to Peshawar and the two were killed in the attack. Taliban wanted to eliminate source of information to the security forces and they succeeded in their attempt."

"Surveillance Of Mosques In America," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (06/11)

"Islamic organization, Michigan has protested over FBI attitude, saying that FBI keeps any eye on Islamic Centers, Mosques, Imams and 'Namazis' by employing espionage equipment.... The said action by FBI will create disharmony and tension among followers of various religions, which will be dangerous for world peace."

"American Advice To Expand Military Operation To Waziristan," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (06/11)

"Pentagon has urged Pakistan to not only continue its operation against extremists, but expand it to south and North Waziristan. Instead of expanding the military operation we should try to wrap it up and dictating American authorities should be told that neither peace could return to Afghanistan in the presence of American forces nor could terrorism be stopped. Instead of giving us aid America should withdraw its troops from Afghanistan and stop drone attack on our soil. After that there would not be any justification left for militancy and suicide attacks would stop automatically."

"Get Rid Of The Fear," an op-ed by Hameed Akhtar in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (06/11)

"This is now an open reality that the Taliban influence in FATA, Swat and Malakand Division was the outcome of fear and not public sympathy.... In the last few months, about 60 common Pakistanis in Waziristan, Kurram Agency and Bajaur were slaughtered after being accused of spying for America and Pakistan. During the same period, some 34 people were accused of espionage and slaughtered like

animals in Swat. In total 100 people were slaughtered on the pretext of spying.... These savage acts were also recorded on video and later publicized through an organized network.... Now the situation has changed altogether as a clear majority of the people are open against these condemnable activities of the Taliban. Now it is up to the concerned departments to use people's power against the Taliban."

"Waziristan - Final Battle?," an op-ed by Asad Munir in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (06/11)

"The army's final battle is likely to be fought against Baitullah in South Waziristan. The remnants of terrorist from Swat, Mohmand, Orakzai, Kurram, Darra, are likely to fall back to South Waziristan. The elements of banned Jihadi organizations, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Sipah-e-Sahaba, Jaish and other Jihadis are likely to join this battle for their survival. Timely and successful completion of the Malakand operation will have immense effects on future operations.... Pakistan is at war and we must win it for our future generations to enable them to live a life of their choice, especially for the daughters of this nation."

"Better Alive Than Dead," an op-ed by Kamila Hyat in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (06/11)

"The thousands of young fighters who were encouraged at various points to take up arms in the name of 'Jihad' were never deprogrammed or offered other roles in society. In Swat, those who went with Sufi Mohammad Khan to Afghanistan in 2001 to fight U.S.-led forces were in many cases simply released back into society when they returned as angry, defeated warriors some of whom had faced mistreatment in Afghan jails. These men, some no more than teenagers when they were recruited by Sufi, today form in many cases the ranks of the Taliban in the Valley. We need a rehabilitation plan for them and for others who have since been herded into madressahs and other training institutions. For many of these boys, power stems only from the gun they see in the hands of others and yearn to hold themselves.... A well-planned policy is needed to turn it back and to demonstrate to people that there are indeed other ways of getting ahead in life."

"The Balm Of Hurt Minds," an op-ed by I.M. Mohsin in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (06/11)

"To promote peace in our region, Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan have to form a front which would be able to sort out all kind of extremists. Such collaboration would get a real boost if an equitable solution to Kashmir is contrived by the parties. A single-minded approach thereafter to terrorism by the partners with the help of U.S./China has great potential to deliver security to the area as well as the world."

"Igniting Hope," an op-ed by Muqtedar Khan in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (06/11)

"President Obama has found the language to transcend the hitherto zero-sum conundrum of the Israeli-Palestinian issue. If he can translate this into policy, then perhaps we can finally witness the emergence of an independent Palestinian nation thriving side by side with a secure Israel... President Obama through this speech may not have conquered Muslim hearts and minds, but he certainly has ignited hope of a peaceful and dignified future."

"Obama's Mid-East Initiative," an op-ed by Burhanuddin Hasan in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (06/11)

"According to U.S. analysts Mr. Obama's Cairo speech meant different things to different people. He supported Israel, but reached out to the Muslim world in an unprecedented way. Some friends were troubled while others were reassured. Some of America's enemies denounced it but none dismissed it."  
Patterson